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The philosophy that guides society is determined to some extent by the interpretation given to the present, past, and future. New Mexico is inhabited by two groups of people with a different understanding of life who are both striving to live peacefully with each other. Their differences complement each other. Both the Anglos and the Mexicanos may be classed as romantics, but in different time relationships.

The Anglos' romanticism is based upon the future, the present being a preparation for that future. The past is gone. Men of vision are produced by this philosophy. Hope is present during temporary dissatisfaction. All activities are well-planned in advance as a carryover from organized industry and time schedules. Urbanized Anglos find little in common with impoverished Mexicanos.

The Mexicano, or mestizo, a racial amalgamation of resigned, stolid Indians and lighthearted Spaniards, has based his romanticism on the reality of the present and its relation to the past. The future is attacked with a fatalism, an indefinite term, mañana, which expresses a remoteness missing from "tomorrow". He lives an improvised, spontaneous existence. He never puts off for tomorrow what can be enjoyed only today. He is not lazy, but he works only enough to support his meager needs.

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From:
Fruit of the Vine
Anthology of Western Writers

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MANANA IS TODAY

During the height of the depression, a philanthropic organization sent the Navajo Indians a carload of pickles in order to alleviate the needs of that tribe. Unaccustomed as the Redmen were to such relishes, they were made no happier by the sincere efforts of their white brothers to appease their hunger. Pickles are a delectable embellishment to the menu of those who like pickles, but they add nothing to the happiness of those who do not eat them. Dried mutton or corn would have fulfilled the wants of the Navajo far better than the savory pickles. Equally disheartening were the results of the discarded system of Indian education which at one time forced a child to enter school for a given time, at the end of which he returned to the village and "took to the blanket." Many a head shook, disillusioned and disappointed, because the Redman insisted on finding happiness in his own way. Until recently, an Indian's own reaction to living, and his philosophy of life had not been greatly taken into account. Years ago the object was to make a white man, a poor imitation at that, rather than a better Indian, and the results were obviously very unsatisfactory.

"Happiness," someone has said, "is getting what you want." If it is pickles you want, beans will not satisfy you. But if the other fellow prefers beans and refuses our pickles, we call him a "bean eater." Moreover, some of us want our beans at a different time, adding the other element to the acquisition of happiness which is not only "getting what you want," but, "when you want it." In the satisfaction of material needs, the world differs very little. We all demand food and shelter, the means by which to live; but the ends for which to live, the spiritual phaseof life, is not so uniformly satisfied. In formulating our criterion of spiritual guidance, we have before us three periods in life which determine the order of our existence: the past, the present, and the future. Our philosophy of living will revolve to a great extent around one of these three depending upon what time of life we consider most essential. The present is a reality, the past a recollection of a reality that has ceased to exist, and the future a conjecture of what may come to pass. Hence, the last two form the basis of romanticism, since one is no longer here and the other has not yet arrived.

If we consider romanticism as a phase of life created by the imagination and opposed to realism, we can safely say that most people are romanticists. But the nature of that romanticism will depend upon what it is based. Both the Anglos and the Mexicanos are romantic, except that the Anglo-American romanticism is based on the future, and Spanish romanticism is nourished in the past. In this trinity of time, the present is greatly modified by the choice each makes of what has gone before or what is about to come. Anglo children, from an early age, are taught that the present is simply a preparation for the future, that the past is past and gone, and that

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one must look into the future for a vision. "Don't cry over spilt milk." "Hitch your wagon to a star." "Save for a rainy day," and "Be prepared." The present is projected into the future to such an extent that the child lives for the day when he shall grow up to be the president of a bank, a college professor, a policeman, or a successful engineer. In school the boy is tempted with stories of men who disregarded the present in order that they might achieve something great in the future. Yes, such a philosophy produces men of vision, of imagination; men who live constantly in the hope that some day "their ship may come in." Much may be said for this type of romanticism in the formative period of youth. Young men are willing to work their way through college, scrubbing floors, cleaning windows, and denying themselves untold happiness in the present, in order that the acquiring of a diploma in the end may bring about the longed-for fulfillment of their desires. When men have grandiose visions of the future, we often say that they are building "castles in Spain." Spanish castles to a Spaniard are merely recollection of what once was a reality. Castles built upon the future are practical American bungalows.

The interpretation given to present, past and future determines to some extent the philosophy that guides society. American society, while it may be temporarily dissatisfied, is always hopeful because of the insight and faith it has upon the future, and in the midst of the greatest depression it can say: "Prosperity is around the corner." Hispanic philosophy is, in many ways, quite the contrary. To a Mexicano the future is an unreality of which he is conscious only insofar as it can be projected into the present. The American may see it as a hypothesis upon which to speculate safely, sell on the installment plan, or buy insurance, but in New Mexico the future is attacked with a fatalism that is little short of a roulette wheel philosophy. A ver que Dios nos da. Come what may, there is consolation in the popular belief that No hay mal que por bien no venga. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

The great emphasis is placed on the present simply because the present constitutes a reality. When thepresent has passed, it forms the basis of romanticism, a romanticism that is based upon that which once was a reality. To Hispanic proples the past is interpreted in terms of achievement, lineage, and custom. Even their songs eulogize an old love, Un amor que no se olvida ni se deja, while in English, future old age is romanticized in "Sliver threads among the gold." The former sings of a love that was, the latter of a love that will be. The Mexicano does not forget his traditions because they constitute his past reality, the basis for his romanticism. Tradition to the American, however, means an expedient, a convenient course for future action. The course of action in Spanish New Mexico is determined by conditions which exist in the present rather than by an accepted formula. Witness the New Mexican judge who ruled that cases be determined by their merit and not by precedent. A story told of a Mexicano whose young wife ran away. The judge assured him that he would

soon forget, and added, "Who knows, tomorrow another girl will come along." To which the injured husband answered dubiously, "Oh, yes, mañana, but what do I do now?" He could not be consoled by illusions of tomorrow.

New Mexico, likewise, is the land of today, and if there is a future, the Mexicanos are willing to wait until it comes around and is transformed into a reality. Meanwhile, the future is conceived in an undetermined light, expressed in an indefinite term, manana. The translation of this word has led to a misinterpretation of purpose on the part of those who view the New Mexican with limited understanding of his philosophy. Manana, like the shrug of the shoulders, expresses a remoteness that the word "tomorrow" does not convey. It does not mean tomorrow. A hunter passed over a broken bridge several times near a New Mexican village in Mora county and every time he did so he was assured that the bridge would be fixed mañana, but the bridge was never fixed on the morrow.

Howdisappointing is life in New Mexico to those who plan every minute of the future and know definitely that on Monday they will play bridge, on Tuesday attend a meeting, on Wednesday go to a dance, and bathe on Saturday! Julio Camba, the Spanish humorist, says: "We improvise everyting, our fun as well as our work." Anglo Americans, on the other hand, will warn a speaker a week in advance that he will be called upon at a banquet to make an "impromptu" speech!

The time for improvisation is the present, and those who live in the present, while leading a very improvised existence, will live more spontaneously and with more abandon. A call on a New Mexican friend may turn the evening into asocial gathering. A dinner, a dance, a love affair, and even a fight may ensue, but none of it will be planned beforehand. The Anglo has calling hours, makes arrangement for his good times, and plans to meet a person whom he wishes to befriend. This attitude is a carryover from organized industry where schedules are meticulously observed for purposes of efficiency, and justly so, but it takes the "human" out of human relations at times.

New Mexico has been called the "Land of Mañana" that is, the "Land of Today," when analyzed. "Never do today what you can do tomorrow" is an interpretation of manana that is misleading because it vitiates the realistic sense of actuality. The New Mexican never puts off until tomorrow what can be enjoyed only today. He prefers to live life from day to day with a minimum of concern over the morrow. The time to sit in the sun is when the sun is shining, for there is no assurance that the sun will shine when wanted. Many a picnic has been ruined for those who insist on setting the date in advance. The New Mexicans are likely to have a picnic when the weather is conducive to it. It is the course of action of realists who choose to enjoy the present rather than to speculate upon the future. The sunny side of the house is a convenient rendez-vous on sunny afternoons, but

on cold days the same men who lounged lazily, vegetating against the wall, may be seen bringing in wood. To a Nordic this manner of doing is incomprehensible; it is improvident.

An educator was being shown through the rural districts in the mountainous sections of New Mexico late in the Fall, and noticed that there were no stacks of wood for the Winter. He inquired from his travelling companion what sort of fuel these people used, and was informed that they used firewood. "But", he insisted, "where do they store it?" He was told that the wood from the neighboring woods was never stored. It seemed very strange to a man who projected himself onto the future that the New Mexican mountaineers should make no provisions in advance for the coming winter. The educator continued asking: "What do these people do when they need wood?" Whereupon he was promptly informed that the Mexicanos get their wood when they need it, and not before.

To most observers this attitude toward life means nothing more than indifference and laziness; to others it appears to be a series of contradictions. It is contradictory if we call it laziness and sheer indifference; not that there may not be, as in all men, those who are in reality indolent. But, laziness is an indisposition to exertion, and not a sequence of activity and inactivity. We characterize the Mexican peasant as a lazy indifferent fellow, yet the markets in Mexico are filled with millions of craft products meticulously made by hand, and with superb craftsmanship. The same peasant who sits in the sun and enjoys his leisure turns out millions of sarapes, crockery, etc., but he uses a different yardstick in employing his time and accounting for the future. A certain wantlessness restrains his acquisition of wealth, and living in the present consumes what the provident puts away for the future.

Yes, the Mexicanos in New Mexico continue living <u>today</u>. Thoughts of the morrow are far removed from their consciousness. Their Anglo brothers push on with their sights set on the future. Young boys turn to little men, young girls to little women. The former have bank account, the latter hope chests, but the Mexicano plays when he is a boy, works when necessary, pays for the bride's outfit when he marries her, and in his old age turns back and says: "Alla en mis tiempos." (Back in my day.) He has no desire to be young again, he is happy with the present, ages gracefully, and will derive great pleasure from recalling the past. It is his romanticism, a long sequence of past realities. Old women need not paint their face to appear young, nor do old men need to turn into foxy grandpas. When they were young, they were allowed to do what young folks do, and their parents lost no sleep because their children had no thought of tomorrow.

In Spanish, even grammatically, the future is of little importance. In the last decade the future subjunctive has disappeared; the future tense is formed with the <u>present</u> of the auxiliary, and the present is used to express

the future, "La semana que entra vengo a verle." (Next week I come to see you.) The most representative character of Spanish literature lived fast and furiously in the present, so much so that he was threatened with a future punishment to which Don Juan answered very characteristically: "Tan largo me lo fiais" (so late in coming), that is, he took little cognizance of the future.

One of the most profitless methods of selling to a Mexicano is the payment plan. One of two conditions will result. He refuses to buy, because he is afraid to tie himself to the future, or he will buy and be unable to make the payments when they fall due. Usually the company will recover the goods and the salesman will swear that the Mexicanos are all dishonest. The wise merchant will approach with his goods on pay day when the people have money, because they will forget that there are thirty days to each month and spend in one day the wages that should carry them for the remaining twenty-nine days. The process is the reverse of widespread belief that the Mexicanos will work a whole month in order to spend it in one day. They will spend it when they get it. In Mexico, the peones in a sugar factory were getting fifty centavos a day. A very altruistic capitalist increased their wages to a peso a day. Three days later, no one showed up to work. When the workers were questioned, it was disclosed that fifty cents a day paid amply for their wants, therefore, when wages went up to a peso, it was necessary to work only three days a week.

In addition to the traditional realism and his impassiveness toward the future, there are other elements which characterize the Mexicano in New Mexico and make his philosophy of life incomprehensible to an outsider.

The new world mestizo, the result of a racial amalgamation, is a product that is not yet well defined. Like any biological hybrid, he is susceptible to irregularities and throwbacks. This fact adds greatly to the incomprehensibility of the Mexicano. The Indian has contributed a feeling of resignation and stolidity of character that has made possible the survival of life in New Mexico despite the great difficulties under which the population has had to live. It is remarkable to see the amount of suffering and want these people have been able to withstand. The lightheartedness of the Spaniard in the midst of an unkind fate is merely a complement to the basic endurance of the Indian. It is a philosophy determined mostly by the current flow of circumstances, a philosophy that is spontaneous, brilliant, and superficial, but durable. Spanish philosophy does not have the vertical dimension of Nordic philosophy, but it does possess a horizontal one which adds variety, lightheartedness, and gayety to life.

Place Europeans in the same conditions under which New Mexicans have had to live and they will become dissatisfied, refuse to remain and leave a ghost town in their wake. Anglos who come to New Mexico with a living income are disconcerted by the complacency with which life is led in the midst of poverty,

and scantiness. This very resignation is conducive to a relatively peaceful state of affiars, a condition to be preferred these days to the constant shifting of population which the depression produced. The highways in New Mexico are not filled with thumb riders who seek to better themselves by moving. The Mexicano plods on, whether with a burro, small acreage, working for the highway, or employed by an Americano. There is no danger of these men starting a march to Washington.

New Mexico contains two general groups of people with a different understanding of life, both striving to live peacefully with each other. Both resort to comparisons in an effort to understand each other's ways. To judge comparatively two peoples that are not analogous is dangerous because it is misleading. The important question is not which is superior, or which is the standard, but rather, wherein are their differences a complement to each other.

As a further means of understanding acculturation in New Mexico, one must realize that American civilization is, for the most part, dependent upon industrialism, while New Mexican life is composed mostly of rural communities where the folk element is still a vital force. The rural element of English speaking United States has not found it so difficult to establish itself under more or less comparable conditions, but the urbanized segment in such a society finds little in common with the New Mexican peasant.

The more salient manifestations of folk culture appear in the form of craft and architecture. These are the things that the tourist and the newcomer consider concrete evidences of New Mexican culture, but what lies back of these products remains much of a mystery, even to those who are sympathetic. Moreover, there are other equally important phases of the Mexicano's life which need to be presented to a public who will, in time, either blend with him or outnumber him to extinction. The language of New Mexico, the song of the troubadour, the folk theatre, and other forms of folklore constitute a fundamental part of his existence. If each one of these elements is dealt with as a living force rather than as so much material to be catalogued according to some preconceived index, we shall have a picture of a state that is still vastly different from most of the others, though comparable, to some extent, with three or four which also have a bicultural background.

Arthur L. Campa